

## Summary

This report includes research and a summary of the work of the Economic Affairs Interim Committee, specific to the study of Senate Joint Resolution 20 as outlined in the Economic Affairs Interim Committee's 2017-18 work plan and Senate Joint Resolution 20 (2017). The research in this report, combined with highlights of key information provided to the Economic Affairs Interim Committee, was used by the Economic Affairs Interim Committee in reaching its findings. To review additional information, including audio minutes and exhibits, visit the Economic Affairs Interim Committee website: [www.leg.mt.gov/eaic](http://www.leg.mt.gov/eaic).

## Proposed Findings:

- A Montana's definition of high-poverty counties for grantmaking purposes should be revised to mean a county that has a poverty rate greater than Montana's average county poverty rate as determined by the U.S. Census estimates for the most current year available.
- B The Big Sky Economic Development Trust Fund ought to serve, in particular, high-poverty, high-unemployment areas. The statutes governing the grantmaking for job creation, in particular (not necessarily planning grants), should include high-unemployment as a criteria to get additional funds provided to high-poverty counties.
- C The legislature should consider making the Indian Country Economic Development program, which includes the Indian Equity Fund grants, a grant program recognized in statute thereby providing legislative direction and continuity.
- D The Department of Labor and Industry is urged to report the U-6 unemployment information whenever that number becomes available, to add to its reporting of the standard U-3 unemployment rate. Both numbers would be intended to give more recognition to the discouraged and marginally attached members of the state's labor force that are reflected in the U-6 number.
- E The Department of Labor and Industry is urged to work with tribal governments to develop reporting options for unemployment that provide a more complete picture of those unable to obtain adequate jobs on or near reservations. The collaboration may include incentives based on reporting by tribes required for federal programs, such as Public Law 102-477 reports or their equivalents.
- F The Department of Public Health and Human Services and the Department of Labor and Industry are urged to enhance their case management services for persons with disabilities to assist them in obtaining jobs.